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Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
HA-05 IO-13 /084 W
----------064094 211030Z /21
P R 210915Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7882
INFO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

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E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, MY
SUBJ: RELIGIOUS CLASHES

1. EMBASSY HAS LEARNED FROM A VARIETY OF USUALLY RELAIBEL SOURCES THAT A SPATE OF DESECRATIONS OF HINDU TEMPLES HAS CULMINATED IN A CLASH OVER THE WEEKEND IN WHICH FOUR PERSONS, ALL ETHNIC MALAY MUSLIMS, REPORTEDLY WERE KILLED, ONE SERIOUSLY WOUNDED, AND OVER A SCORE ETHNIC INDIAN HINDUS JAILED. THE POLICE ARE ACTIVELY INVESTIGATING THE MATTER AND, WE ARE TOLD, THE PRIME MINISTER HAS BEEN BRIEFED ON THE SITUATION.

2. ALTHOUGH DETAILS ARE STILL SKETCHY AND NEWSMEDIA HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED NOT TO REPORT THE INCIDENT PENDING RELEASE OF THE OFFICIAL POLICE REPORT, IT APPEARS THAT FIVE YOUNG MALAYS WERE SET UPON BY A NUMBER OF INDIANS GUARDING A TEMPLE IN A RURAL AREA NORTH OF KUALA LUMPUR.

3. ACCORDING TO VERSIONS OF THE INCIDENT REACHING US THE YOUNG MALAYS WERE ISLAMIC ZEALOTS BENT ON
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DESTROYING WHAT THEY VIEWED AS BLASPHEMOUS (HINDU) IDOLS (DEITIES). THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL PRESS ACCOUNTS OF VANDALISM AT HINDU TEMPLES PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT ANE WE HAVE HEARD THAT THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF SUCH ACTS IN THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS.

4. COMMENT. THIS REPORRT OF BLOODSHED IS

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DISQUIETING AND UNDOUBTEDLY IS CAUSING THE GOM GREAT CONCERN. THERE IS SOME SPECULATION THAT THIS PROMPTED THE PRIME MINISTER'S REMARKS LAST NIGHT IN CONNECTION WITH A KORAN READING COMPETITION HERE TO THE EFFECT THAT "MUSLIMS MUST SET AN EXAMPLE IN HELPING THE GOVERNMENT MAINTAIN PEACE AND PRESERVE UNITY AND UNDERSTANDING AMONG THE VARIOUS RACES IN THIS COUNTRY." AS ADDRESSES RECALL FROM GOM'S HANDLING OF THE CORRUPTION CASE OF DISGRACED MALAY HERO DATUK HARUN IDRIS, FORMER CHIEF MINISTER OF SELANGOR, THE GOM TAKES THE MATTER OF MAINTAINING COMMUNAL PEACE VERY SERIOUSLY. HOWEVER, ITS HANDLING OF THIS INCIDENT WILL HAVE TO BE ESPECIALLY CAREFUL IN VIEW OF THE MALAY COMMUNITY'S CURRENT PRE-OCCUPATION WITH RELIGIOUS MATTERS CONNECTED WITH THE MUSLIM HOLY MONTH OF RAMADAN.
MILLER

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NNN

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Litigation History:
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Review Exemptions: n/a
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